# "TRACES OF THE TRADE: A STORY FROM THE DEEP NORTH"

**SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2010** 

2:00 PM

BROOKI	<b>LINE</b>	<b>PUBL</b>	.IC L	<b>JBRAR</b>	Y
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## **HUNNEMAN HALL**

**361 Washington Street** 

A film with discussion led by Dimitry Anselme of

**Facing History and Ourselves** 

African American Scholars Program at Brookline High School
Brookline Public Schools K-12 Social Studies
Brookline Adult and Community Education
Chobee Hoy Associates
Rotary Club of Brookline

Printer Friendly Flyer (PDF) "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North"

Chair Dr. Barbara B. Brown

Malcolm Cawthorne

Reverend George Chapman

Karen Fischer

Dr. Lloyd Gellineau
Mark Gray
Marilyn Hershfield
Rita McNally
Dr. Emilie D. Steele

Director C. Stephen Bressler

#### **Mission**

Formed in 2006, Hidden Brookline is a project of the Brookline Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission. Our mission is to bring to light the history of enslaved people of African descent who lived and worked in Brookline, and to educate the public as to the involvement that Brookline residents had with regard to slavery and the abolitionist movement. The Hidden Brookline Committee collaborates with other Town organizations such as the Brookline Preservation Commission and the Brookline Cemetery Trustees as well as private groups such as the Brookline Historical Society and other organizations and individuals locally and regionally.

The Hidden Brookline Committee consists of members of the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission as well as members of the public. If you wish to become a member and attend our meetings and work on our programs or to just be on our mailing list, send your name, address, and e-mail address to: Hidden Brookline Committee, c/o <a href="Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission">Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission</a>,

11 Pierce Street, Brookline, MA 02445 or e-mail at

sbressler@brooklinema.gov

The Hidden Brookline Committee generally meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Brookline Health Building, 11 Pierce Street, Brookline, MA 02445 and are open to the public. Meeting notices are posted on the Town's <a href="Meeting Calendar">Meeting Calendar</a>. <a href="Hidden Brookline minutes are posted at here.">Hidden Brookline minutes are posted at here.</a>

#### Contact Email for the Hidden Brookline Committee

Hidden Brookline Committee, c/o Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission, 11 Pierce Street, Brookline, MA 02445 or e-mail at <a href="mailto:sbressler@brooklinema.gov">sbressler@brooklinema.gov</a>.

In cooperation with the Brookline Historical Society the Hidden Brookline Committee was represented by Dr. Emilie Dawes Steele at the April 20 Patriot's Day celebration. Dr. Steele is a descendant of William Dawes, who, with Paul Revere, rode to towns outside of Boston alerting people that the British were coming.



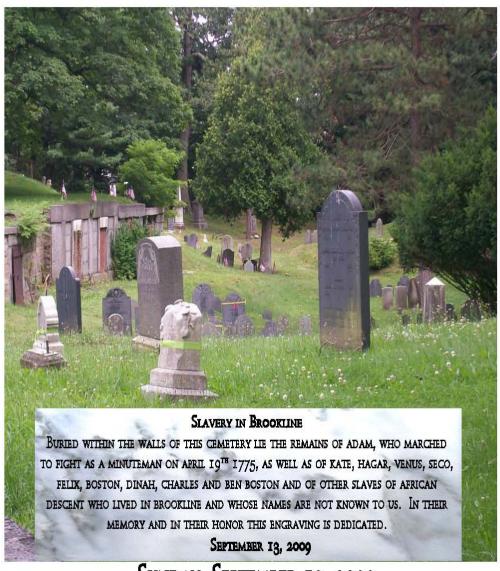
Dr. Emilie Dawes Steele addresses gathering
Program recognizing presence of slaves in Old Burying Ground

The Hidden Brookline Committee chaired by resident and former Commission associate member Dr. Barbara Brown, and including Commission Vice Chair Karen Fischer and member Rita McNally, and with several members of the public being active including Brookline High School teacher Malcolm Cawthorne, former Commission member Reverend George Chapman, Dr. Lloyd Gellineau, town meeting member Mark Gray, Marilyn Hershfield, and Dr. Emilie Steele, worked together with the Cemetery Trustees and Parks and Open Spaces Department to plan a recognition of the presence of slaves in the Old Burying Ground.

On September 13 an engraving in the wall at the Old Burying Ground was unveiled before a gathering of over 300 persons. The emotional and historic event featured comments by Dr. Barbara Brown and master of ceremonies Malcolm Cawthorne as well as guest speaker State Representative Byron Rushing. Also speaking were Chair of the Board of Selectmen Nancy Daly, and Chair of the Cemetery Trustees Abbe Cohen. Brookline High School students Gigi Owens and Amodhi Weeresinghe led the gathering in song. Refreshments were donated by Aramark of Fenway Park through the assistance of Vice Chair Karen Fischer. The program was recorded by Brookline Access Television.

# THE HIDDEN BROOKLINE COMMITTEE

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE UNVEILING OF A MEMORIAL
TO HONOR AND REMEMBER
AFRICAN-AMERICAN SLAVES IN THE OLD BURYING GROUND



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2009
2:00 - 3:00 P.M.
CEREMONY AT THE OLD BURYING GROUND
CORNER OF WALNUT AND CHESTNUT STREETS

MALCOLM CAWTHORNE, MASTER OF CEREMONIES
BYRON RUSHING, SPEAKER
BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL A CAPPELLA SINGERS

9 / 35

# Dedication of an Engraving to Honor and Remember African-American Slaves in the Old Rurying Ground

## SLAVERY IN BROOKLINE

BURIED WITHIN THE WALLS OF THIS CEMETERY LIE THE REMAINS OF ADAM, WHO MARCHED TO FIGHT AS A MINUTEMAN ON APRIL 19

1775, AS WELL AS OF KATE, HAGAR, VENUS, SECO, FELIX, BOSTON, DINAH, CHARLES AND BEN BOSTON AND OF OTHER SLAVES OF AFRICAN DESCENT WHO LIVED IN BROOKLINE AND WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT KNOWN TO US. IN THEIR MEMORY AND IN THEIR HONOR THIS ENGRAVING IS DEDICATED.

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2009** 

Sponsored by the
Hidden Brookline Committee
of the
Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission
Brookline, Massachusetts

Sunday, September 13, 2009 2:00 p.m.

### **PROGRAM**

Welcome
Malcolm Cawthorne, Master of Ceremonies

"Lift Every Voice" Gigi Owens, BHS Class of 2012

Remarks
Barbara Brown, Chair, Hidden Brookline Committee

Greetings
Nancy Daly, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Greetings
Abbe Cohen, Chair, Trustees of Walnut Hill Cemetery

"Wade in the Water"
Jaquelle Jones, BHS Class of 2012

Guest Speaker Byron Rushing

Unveiling of the Engraving

"Swing Low Sweet Chariot" Amodhi Weeresinghe, BHS Class of 2010

Closing Remarks

Refreshments

#### Hidden Brookline Committee

Dr. Barbara B. Brown, Chair C. Stephen Bressler Malcolm Cawthorne The Rev. George Chapman Karen Fischer Dr. Lloyd Gellineau Mark Gray Marilyn Hershfield Rita McNally, J.D. Dr. Emilie D. Steele

In putting this program together the Hilden Brookline Committee gives thanks to:

Aramark

Brookline Access Television Brookline Community Foundation Brookline Department of Public Works Brookline Economic Development Division

Brookline Historical Society
Brookline Housing Authority
Brookline Police
Brookline Public Library
Brookline Public Schools

okline Public Scho Brookline TAB

Brookline Veterans Services Department
First Parish Church of Brookline
Friends of the Old Burying Ground
Garden Club of Brookline
Chobee Hoy
Trustees of Walnut Hill Cemetery

We would also like to thank Erin Chute Gallentine, Director of the Parks and Open Space Division of the DPW, for facilitating the process of the engraving and Ann Marie Cedrone of the Veterans Services Department for her assistance with the production of the event poster.

> Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission Dr. Ed Wang, Chair Karen Fischer, Vice Chair C. Stephen Bressler, Director

Created by Town Meeting in 1970, the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission is Brookline's official town agency working in the areas of inter-group relations, civil right and youth advocacy. The Hidden Brookline Committee is a program of the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission and is made up of members of the Commission and other interested members of the public.

#### Lift Every Voice Words by James Weldon Johnson, Music by John Johnson

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

#### Wade in the Water (Traditional)

Chorus:
Wade in the water.
Wade in the water, children.
Wade in the water.
God's gonna trouble the water.

Well, who are these children all dressed in red?
God's a-gonna trouble the water
Must be the children that Moses led
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

#### Chiorus:

Who's that young girl dressed in white Wade in the Water Must be the Children of Israelites God's gonna trouble the Water.

#### Swing Low, Sweet Charlot by Wallis Willis

#### Chiorus:

Swing low, sweet charlot, Comin' for to carry me home; Swing low, sweet charlot, Comin' for to carry me home.

I looked over Jordan, And what did I see, Comin' for to carry me home, A band of angels comin' after me, Comin' for to carry me home.

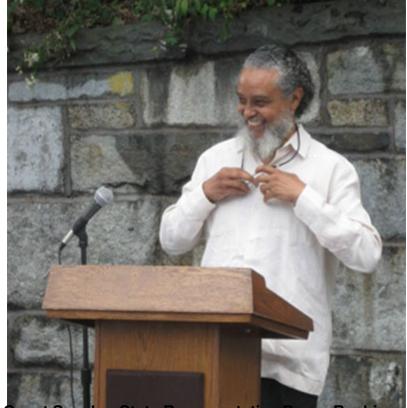




Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Nancy Daly Addresses gathering



Chairman of Cemetery Trustees Abbe Cohen addresses gathering



Guest Speaker State Representative Byron Rushing addresses gathering



Guest Speaker State Representative Byron Bushing addresses gathering



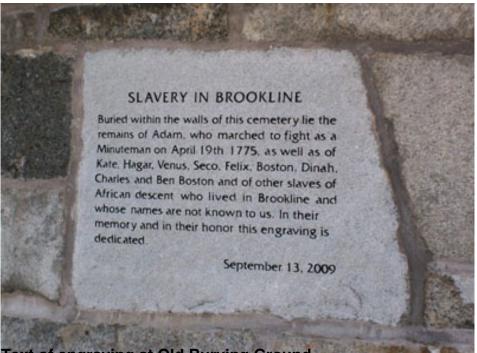
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Amodhi Weeresinghe leads singing of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"



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# Dr. Barbara Brown, Chairman of Hidden Brookline Committee Remarks at the Dedication of the Memorial to the Slaves Buried in Brookline's Old Burying Ground

There is a proverb, widespread in Africa: We are people through our ties with other people. . . .

- I stand here as part of that larger 'we': as a member of the Hidden Brookline Committee, which has done the research, the thinking and the planning behind today.
- I stand here on behalf of the many others who have also worked for today's' commemoration
- I stand here on behalf of all of us gathered together this day to acknowledge & to honor these Brookline residents—these slaves.

The journey to today began 10 yrs ago: when we uncovered the history of the URR in Brookline & celebrated it with justifiable and great pride.

Our history is more complex than simply one of triumphs over evil. . As Hannah Arendt has said, We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, and to discard the bad.

Several years ago, this journey continued.

I was in CVS, when I ran into Brookline's Human Relations Commissioner, Steve Bressler. Steve said I should really check out the bronze plaque in the Town Hall entrance—the plaque that honors Brookline people who fought at the Battle of Lexington in 1775.

When I asked why the plaque was so interesting, Steve just said, go look.

- So I went
- I looked: I saw no women & no famous names—no Dukakis
- Then I saw it.
- Hidden in plain view
  - o For everyone to see

- o Yet no one noticed
- At the bottom of the plaque in a separate place were 3 names listed thus:
  - o Esq Gardner's Adam
  - o Esq White's Peter
  - o Esq Boylston's Prince
- Adam is buried here & is one of those we commemorate today.
- (The story of what happened to the courageous Prince, once owned by Boylston, is for another day.)

I phoned Steve and in short order the Hidden Brookline Committee was formed, (as part of the Human Relations & Youth Resource Commission). Our mission is simple: to bring to light this hidden history of slavery.

(We welcome new members!)

We began with research. In the mid-1700's in Brookline & neighboring towns, slavery was normal

Slaves were part of the fabric of the town, although they were not a large % of the population.

- If you dined at Dr. Boylston's home—still standing on Boylston St (Route 9)—you'd likely be served by a slave.
- When you walked to a neighbor's home, you might see a slave driving a horse and cart to market, full of Brookline's famous melons.
- At church, slaves would be praying in the segregated section.

Hidden Brookline also began walking tours for 4th graders studying Colonial America. When our first group from Runkle School visited this cemetery, I asked them to find Adam's grave, along with the graves of the other Revolutionary soldiers buried here. (They could not find it, though they could find his owner's.) I told them about the other slaves buried here. Troubled, they and their teacher, Jay Sugarman, decided to do something about this and wrote an op-ed for the TAB titled "We should honor Brookline's buried slaves."

And today, together, we are doing just that—honoring Brookline's people who received no

public honor during their lives.

We do not have the power to undo the past or to heal the wounds these slaves endured. But we can acknowledge the pain of that past. We can stand here in sorrow. And we can call their names.

- Hagar born in 1717 and lived to be 50. She was named after a slave in the Bible.
- Felix owned by Henry Sewall. Part of his work was cleaning our Town Hall until his death in 1764.
- **Boston** farmed for Dr. Zabdiel Boylston, making it possible for Dr. Boylston to focus on his famous medical practice.
- Venus was baptized in the church up the hill and died as a young woman.
- Kate was a child of 8 when she died and was buried here in the Sewall family tomb. Let us honor her short life.
- About the other slaves on this engraved stone we have precious, little information, so I simply call their names and ask you to hold them in your hearts today:
  - o Seco
  - o Charles
  - o Dinah
  - o and Ben Boston
- Others were enslaved, lived, died and were buried here, but their names are lost to us.
- Let us not forget them.

We have gathered here today in common agreement that we and those who follow us shall remember all who lived here: all

- who walked the roads and paths of this town
- who had hopes
- and who suffered great sorrows

So that future generations will never again say

- "I didn't know."
- "I didn't understand."

So that this "hidden" history will be hidden no longer and instead become an acknowledged and

sorrowful part of a fuller and more complex understanding of ourselves	sorrowful	part of	a fuller	and more	complex	understanding	g of ourselves
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Barbara B. Brown September 13, 2009

# Byron Rushing's Remarks at the Dedication of the Memorial to the Slaves Buried in Brookline's Old Burying Ground

Buried within the walls of the cemetery lie the remains of Adam, who marched to fight as a Minuteman on April 19, 1775, as well as of Kate, Hagar, Venus, Seco, Felix, Boston, Dinah, Charles, and Ben Boston and of other slaves of African descent who lived in Brookline and whose names are not known to us. In their memory and in their honor this memorial is dedicated.

I am so glad to be with you all—and so many! what a turnout!--this afternoon at this important commemoration. "In their memory..." Let me take a few moments to speak about just that: Memory.

When we lose our memory, we lose the ability to know both where and when we are. Our orientation is made possible, defined by memory. When we have no memory we become disoriented. When I try to explain the importance of history to young people, I ask them to engage in an exercise, a roll play, of losing their memory. They quickly understand that they are not able to answer questions like what day is this or what room or building are they in? I then tell them that I have not lost my memory; they begin to ask me those questions. I answer with inaccuracies, with lies. They realize that theirs is not only a disorientation of time and place. It is also a disorientation of recognizing truth and falsehood. This is the dangerousness of amnesia.

Theologians have a fancy word for the opposite of amnesia. It is a word for recalling, recollecting, remembering what is most important: Anamnesis.

History is our corporate memory. It is the memory of our individual existence incorporated into the memories of others existence. If it is not known, forgotten, "lost, stolen, or strayed," we suffer from corporate amnesia. Today when we consider the enslaved buried in this place, we have the opportunity to recall not only Adam and Kate and the others, but also recollect why we know so little about them and why we know so little about slavery and the slave trade. We have an opportunity to cure our amnesia and consider the opportunities of a corporate anamnesis.

This "recalling" will not be an easy exploration. Slavery and the slave trade in the Americas existed longer than emancipation and civil rights has yet existed. If you use 1619 as the approximate date of the introduction of slavery in the North American British colonies which would become the United States of America, slavery lasted for 246 years. It will not be until 2111 that people of African descent will have been free as long as they have been enslaved in the United States. (Even in Haiti/the Dominican Republic—on Hispaniola, as the Spaniards called that island—where the first successful revolt against slavery occurred---slavery lasted about 285 years; it will be 2085 before Haitians and Dominicans of African descent will have been free as long as they have been enslaved.)

To move from the myth of slavery as an incidental occurrence in the early days of the European occupation of the Americas, to the truth of slavery as part of the truth of the origins of the nations of the Americas and specifically of the origins and economic success of the United States will require the production of an accurate history, a new memory of our founding. The stories which we combine into the set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect the way we as "Americans" perceive who we are is sometimes call a paradigm: "the values, or system of thought, in a society that are most standard and widely held at a given time. Dominant paradigms are shaped both by the community's cultural background and by the context of the historical moment." A more accurate history will lead us to a new paradigm. What is called a paradigm shift. If we accurately consider all the remains buried within the walls of this cemetery, be prepared for a paradigm shift.

Consider this paradigm;

The first record of a group of African people arriving in Massachusetts is from John Winthrop's

Journal, ["History of New England"]. In his July 1637 notation, John Winthrop wrote, "We had now slain and taken, in all, about seven hundred (Indians). We sent fifteen of the boys and two women to Bermuda, by Mr. Pierce; but he, missing it, carried them to Providence Isle."

William Pierce was the captain of the Desire which was built in Marblehead and sailed out of Salem. Providence Isle was a Puritan settlement off the coast of Central America.

In an Entry dated February 26, 1638, Winthrop wrote in his Journal: "Mr. Pierce, in the Salem ship, the Desire, returned from the West Indies after seven months. He had been, at Providence, and brought some cotton, and tobacco, and negroes, etc., from thence, and salt from Tertugos. Dry fish and strong liquors are the only commodities for those parts. He met there two men-of-war, set forth by the lords, etc., of Providence with letters of mart, who had taken divers prizes from the Spaniard, and many negroes."

Lorenzo Greene author of The Negro in colonial New England calls this statement, "the earliest recorded account of Negro slavery in New England... Negroes may have been enslaved before that time but earlier allusions to slavery are inferential."

The founders of whom we are today as a nation are all in this story: The aboriginal, the "native people; the English, the Europeans; and the Africans—what in our language would be come to called the Red, the White and the Black. And they all must be in this new paradigm if it is to approach the truth.

In this revised paradigm of our founding, our civic scripture does maintain its importance: "When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.
"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
And:
"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."
However this new paradigm will always have space to ask, who is this "our"?, this "we"?

Adam Hochschild, in Bury the Chains: Prophets and rebels in the fight to free an empire's slaves points out, that at the end of the 18th century, well over three-quarters of all people alive were in bondage of one kind or another. So no one can doubt the revolutionary nature of these propositions.

In March of last year—2008—the then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice gave a remarkable interview. When asked about race, she reflected: "Well, you know, ... America doesn't have an easy time dealing with race. I sit in my office and the portrait immediately over my shoulder is Thomas Jefferson, because he was my first predecessor. He was the first Secretary of State. And sometimes I think to myself, what would he think ...a black woman Secretary of State as his predecessor 65 times removed...? What would he think that the last two successors have been black Americans? And so, obviously, when this country was founded, the words that were enshrined in all of our great documents and that have been such an inspiration to people around the world.... They didn't have meaning for an overwhelming element of our founding population. And black Americans were a founding population. Africans and Europeans came here and founded this country together; Europeans by choice, and Africans in chains.

And that's not a very pretty reality of our founding, and I think that particular birth defect makes it hard for us to confront it, hard for us to talk about it, and hard for us to realize that it has continuing relevance for who we are today ... And so we deal daily with this contradiction, this paradox about America, that on the one hand, the birth defect continues to have effects on our country, and indeed, on the discourse and effects on perhaps the deepest thoughts that people hold; and on the other hand, the enormous progress that has been made by the efforts of blacks and whites together, to finally fulfill those principles. When we acknowledge all and everyone who made America possible we ...acknowledge good and bad, sin and grace, a complex yet rich history."

This new paradigm will acknowledge all who owned these words by their hearing, heeding, and incorporation of them into their lives over the protests in word and deed of the authors of those words; over the protests of those who continue to believe these words as narrowly as Jefferson and Washington did.

This new paradigm will raise up the words of Fredrick Douglass: "This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. In the light of these ideas, Negroes will be hunted at the North, and held and flogged at the South so long as they submit to those devilish outrages, and make no resistance, either moral or physical. Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others."

This new paradigm is necessary to abolish the artificial concept of race—a construct invented in the 15th and 16th centuries and refined in the 17th, 18th, and 19th in order to make slavery more efficient by confining/reserving it to Africans and people of African descent. And preserved to the present in order to preserve their descendants in profitable states of discrimination and what we call "racism."

This new paradigm will not fear the bad news nor deny it as our heritage whenever we or our parents arrive on these shores. Maya Angelou is correct:

History, despite its wrenching pain, Cannot be unlived, and if faced With courage, need not be lived again.
To do this recalling, this facing with courage, we must confront
The horror: in the paradigm of our founding, native, aboriginal, first people were killed to secure the land. Africans were worked to death in order to exploit the land. (Before the suppression of the slave trade the birth rate among most enslaved women was always lower than it had been in Africa. This only changed when it became illegal and thus too expensive to import Africans. Slavery and the trade is a history of trauma.
And we must confront
The money: In 1860, more wealth existed in the accumulated value of slaves in the United States than in any other sector of the economy except land—only the total value of land

exceeded the total value of enslaved men, women, boys and girls. And this does not include the secondary economies to maintain slavery, such as the food—cod fish—to feed them and the "Negro Cloth" to clothe them and the chains and shackles forged to bind them. And this does not include the value of the products they produced—manufactured into rum and cigars and snuff and-most valuable-- into cotton textiles.

And this does not include the value of the philanthropy

Thomas Handasyd Perkins (December 15, 1764 - January 11, 1854) before the rebellion there he was a slave trader in Haiti, In 1785, when China opened the port of Canton to foreign businesses, Perkins became one of the first Boston merchants to engage in the "China trade", smuggling Turkish opium into China; in later years Perkins became a philanthropist. In 1826, he and his brother, James Perkins, contributed half the sum of \$30,000 that was needed for an addition to the Boston Athenaeum; he was also a major benefactor to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, McLean Hospital, and helped found the Massachusetts General Hospital.; he donated his Boston mansion to the financially troubled "Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind" in 1832 and it was renamed the Perkins School for the Blind.

Buried within this old burying ground are the remains of Adam, Ben Boston. Kate, Hagar, Venus, Seco, Felix, Boston, Dinah and Charles, and of other slaves of African descent who lived in Brookline and whose names are not known to us. The memory of them can be honored by becoming incorporated into our memory. The memory of them can be honored by us recalling the truth of slavery –"that particular birth defect"-- as part of the truth of the origins of the nations of the Americas and specifically of the origins and economic success of the United States; by us producing and using a new paradigm of truth.

In the 19th century Theodore Parker (August 24, 1810 - May 10, 1860) taught Bostonians to: Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways;

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I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. Things refuse to be mismanaged long.
Or as Martin Luther King liked to rephrase it,
"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."
####
Byron Rushing
Byron.rushing@state.ma.us
Sunday, September 13, 2009 Old Burying Ground, Brookline, Massachusetts

Coming Soon